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Viewing cable 06RIYADH9085, DHAHRAN DIGEST 8

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06RIYADH9085**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06RIYADH9085	2006-12-15 09:06	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Riyadh

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/06/22/116306/wikileaks-saudi-crackdown-on-shiites.html>

R 150906Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3738
INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMCONSUL JEDDAH

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 009085

DHAHRAN SENDS
PARIS FOR WALLER, LONDON FOR TSOU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2016
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EPET](#) [KIRF](#) [PA](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: DHAHRAN DIGEST 8

Classified By: Consul General John Kincannon for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This cable is a continuation of a regular series of updates from the Eastern Province (EP) designed to capture some of the EP's local color and items of USG interest that are not necessarily appropriate for a topical cable.

PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN FAHD ON HIS WAY OUT?

12. (C) Consulate staff have heard increasingly vocal grumbling about Prince Mohammed bin Fahd (MbF), the Governor of the Eastern Province over the last few months. EP merchant families are unsatisfied with his performance. He is seen as corrupt and regularly asks for money during meetings for his own pet projects, including the newly established University in the EP that bears his name. In the Eastern Province, many of MbF's interlocutors are busy business people. They are constantly frustrated with MbF because, as they say, time is money and the Prince is consistently late for his scheduled meetings, arrives unprepared, and displays an obvious disinterest in his governmental duties. He reportedly told one senior businessman that he is tired of his gubernatorial responsibilities and would rather focus on his private business interests. There are rumors afoot that there will be a government reshuffle in February and some businessmen are telling us that they hear that MbF is going to find himself without a job. Names in the rumor mill as possible successor governors include al-Gassim's Faisal bin Bandar and former deputy governor of the EP, Saud bin Nayef. One prominent businessman close to MbF, however, thinks there will be no change. In his opinion, Nayef will never allow him to quit and never allow King Abdullah to fire him. (Note: MbF is married to a daughter of Prince Nayef. End Note)

ARAMCO VP TO CG: \$40-\$50 PER BARREL IS OUR EXPECTATION

13. (C) On three separate occasions Mustafa al-Jalali, VP of Governmental Affairs at Aramco, has told the CG that Aramco sees oil prices settling down into the mid-40's. Jalali is one of the company's key "messengers" and when he has a message to convey, he generally repeats it several times to make sure the message is getting through. He has repeated this to us on a couple of occasions, however, we do not interpret this as actual Aramco thinking, but rather what Aramco wants us to think Aramco is thinking.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR: MASS WEDDINGS IN QATEEF

14. (C) PolOff and PAO attended a mass wedding early last month in Qateef. Generally, 6-30 couples can get married at the same time. These events are organized by different charitable organizations for young men who would not otherwise be able to afford the costs of a wedding reception. In Qateef, it is customary to hang large posters advertising your wedding around the city so anyone who knows you and has an inclination to attend will know about the ceremony. This can lead to very costly receptions as the cost of enough goat and lamb for a few thousand people is not cheap. With the advent of mass weddings local men contribute a few thousand riyals and have the cost of the hall, the advertising, and the food taken care of by the charitable society sponsoring the event. There are also religious singers that come to the ceremony that generally cost money but perform at these mass weddings for free. The ladies have their own separate party that is held on the same night in a different location. Five years ago the SAG lifted their informal restriction prohibiting mass weddings in Qateef, allowing the Shia to begin organizing them as they have historically. In the past five years these functions have grown in size and popularity. One contact tells us that last year there were over 300 men who chose to get married in mass wedding ceremonies.

UPCOMING CONTROVERSIAL FILM ABOUT SAUDI WOMEN

15. (C) Prince al-Waleed bin Talal will meet with film director Haifa al-Mansour to discuss creating a film about women in Saudi Arabia. He has told her that he wants the

film to be controversial and wants her to take a leave of absence from her day job at Aramco to fully focus on this project. They will discuss the details of the film and begin to hammer out a contract this week in Riyadh. Haifa al-Mansour wrote, directed and produced one documentary about women in Saudi Arabia called "Women Without Shadows" and she was also the associate producer for the first Saudi motion picture that was just released throughout the Middle East- "Kayf Al Hal?" (Note: There are no movie theaters in Saudi Arabia so the creation of a Saudi film industry in itself is a controversial and recent phenomenon. End Note) They are also trying to negotiate a contract based on a book called, "The Belt" about a small village that lost much of its identity when it was incorporated into the Kingdom and had to take on more Nejd traditions, a theme in al-Mansour's previous film work.

ARAMCO LOOSING ITS LUSTER AMONG RECENT COLLEGE GRADS?

16. (C) Post has been hearing from many of our contacts that Aramco is no longer a dream company to work for. In a recent meeting the CG had with senior Lebanese expatriates working in the oil and gas industry. They compared Aramco to Mexico's PEMEX and described Aramco as an increasingly bloated job factory that is being made to create unnecessary jobs to boost employment opportunities. In the view of these expats, the best and the brightest Saudis no longer want to work at Aramco because advancement is now increasingly more about who you know or your tribal affiliation rather than what you can do. Many of our Aramco Shia contacts tell us that the company was much more of a meritocracy under American management. Although both Aramco and local contractors would love to hire more Saudi petroleum engineers, Saudis typically prefer to study mechanical, civil, or electrical engineering because it gives them more employment choices. If they study petroleum engineering, they are for the most part stuck working for Aramco. (Note: Last year the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals-KFUPM graduated only 27 petroleum engineers, which is a very small number in relation to the size of the oil industry in KSA. End Note) We are told by our contacts that they have much more respect for the petroleum engineering training at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman which reportedly graduates more and better petroleum engineers despite having an oil industry a fraction the size of Saudi Arabia's.

APPROVED: KINCANNON

OBERWETTER